



Ohio State School for the Blind



Cynthia M. Johnson, Interim Superintendent

April 2009

Gerard Marcom, Principal

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Visit our website:
www.ossb.oh.gov

OSSB Students Shine On Stage

Christine Hubbard, OSSB Teacher



Photo courtesy Belhorn family

During January, the Phoenix Theatre for Children presented the production "The Miracle Worker" at the Vern Riffe Center in downtown Columbus. This was a bilingual production that emphasized the importance of language by combining English and American Sign Language—the actors lines were both signed and spoken. The company included actors with visual and hearing impairments. Making their acting debut in the production were Miss Maggie Tolle and Miss Olivia Bump. Both girls are elementary students who attend OSSB.

Baby You're Incredible!

Kay Clarke, Infant/Preschool
Outreach Specialist

What?!? Babies at OSSB? Well...not really at OSSB. The OSSB Infant/Preschool Outreach Program provides information and consultation services free of charge for families and teachers of very young children who are visually impaired. Services are provided in their home communities throughout Ohio.

In its second year of operation, this program helps families and early childhood professionals to:

- Understand children's visual impairments
- Feel confident in their abilities to parent and teach
- Form close, loving bonds with their children
- Find and make fun toys
- Encourage children to explore their environments
- Provide children with "hands-on" language & literacy experiences
- Enable children to use the vision they have
- Locate vision-related resources & information



Photo courtesy of Preston's family

These services are available for each family, and its educational team, through an outreach visit once or twice each year. The visits occur within families' homes, in preschool classrooms, at hospital clinics, and other places that meet the needs of the children's teams. Questions about the Infant/Preschool Outreach Program? Please contact Kay Clarke at 614-728-8805.

Music News

Carol Agler, Music Director

OSSB enjoyed Hal Walker's 10-day residency "Music That Fits in Your Pocket" with all music students. The residency ended with a program by the students and Mr. Hal Walker on February 19, 2009 in which students played harmonicas and banakulas and sang many songs, including The Blind School Blues, a song they helped to write. Another favorite was "Home in Ohio" written by Hal Walker, as well as "Cincinnati" sung by senior Matt Cromer who also contributed lyrics to the song. All students made a banakula and many learned to do the difficult "throw and catch" maneuver.

Hal's 11-year-old daughter, Hallie Walker joined the 5th-6th grade class at OSSB for 2 days so that she might learn of the technology and special instruction for visually impaired students. The entire experience was very special and we are grateful for the grant from the Ohio Arts Council that partially funded the residency, as well as to the OSSB PTSO that purchased harmonicas and materials for all the students to make banakulas.

OSSB Marching Band News

Carol Agler, Music Director

The OSSB Marching Band had some recent engagements and several upcoming concerts.



They appeared Thursday, March 12 at 7pm at Thomas Worthington High School and played for the 10th annual "Battle of Worthington" basketball game. This game highlighted the Worthington Special Olympic basketball team, "The Stars" who played the middle school basketball team from Worthington. It was a very nice event with a great turn out, and was hosted by OSU alum Dimitrious Stanley. OSSB's band played the National Anthem as well as pep tunes throughout the game. During halftime, the Special Olympics cheerleading squad associated with the basketball team did a half-time routine while our band played "Free Ride."

Thursday, April 2 they will rehearse with the Clark Steel Drum Band from Cincinnati, and the two groups will combine to do a performance for the school **Friday, April 3** at 1:00pm in the gym. It promises to be a wonderful concert.

Wednesday, April 8 at 12:30 pm the band will perform "Jupiter" from THE PLANETS by Gustav Holst with the 42-piece Hathaway Brown upper school orchestra in OSSB's auditorium. Hathaway Brown is a private girls' school in Cleveland. This provides our students with an opportunity to perform symphonic music. We have a new OSSB student who plays the violin and this offers him an opportunity to play as well!

Swimming Panthers

Coach Sharon Shaw

This past weekend, the Ohio Panthers hosted the Buckeye Classic. Kentucky, Missouri, Wisconsin and Indiana participated in the swim meet and our Panthers took 1st place overall. The boys won 1st place and the girls placed 2nd. OSSB will travel to the Indiana School for the Blind, April 24th where they will compete in the NCASB swimming conference. Good Luck Panthers!

Independent Living - A Step Further!

Erica Cooper, Residential Rec. Coordinator

Every year, high school students are selected to become tenants in an apartment style setting known here at OSSB as the "student apartment". Up until this school year, it has been located on school grounds, but with the construction preparations and limited campus living space this year, the residential department decided to rent an apartment *off* campus. This location has taken independent living a "step further". The students have an *actual* landlord and emergency maintenance individual to call if there are any issues. They also have the chance to practice their time management skills in more depth as well as budgeting for bills.

According to OSSB senior Cassidy, students are chosen for the apartment through an application process. Currently there are two OSSB senior girls living off campus. They are responsible for making grocery lists, purchasing food and cooking dinner for themselves several nights per week. Thursday nights, they sweep the apartment, empty the trash and do the laundry. So far, everything has worked out really well!

Academic Enrichment

Lisa Modena, Academic Enrichment Team

The Library is open for our residential students after school and it is starting to catch on! Many more students are taking advantage of having a quiet place to finish their evening studies. We are working hard to improve communication between teachers and youth leaders so we may help students keep up with their academic responsibilities. If you have any concerns about your child and our homework help in the evening, you can email me at lmodena@ossb.oh.gov and we can talk about what you would like your child to be doing.

Residential Book Club

Lisa Modena, Academic Enrichment Team

This will be our first month for evening Book Club. It will be divided into two groups; the older students sharing what they are reading for leisure, and the younger group enjoying story time. I have a few youth leaders volunteering to read and act out different books for the children to enjoy. Check out the next issue of the Panther Paws to see how it's going!

Sushi, Anyone?

Nancy Terry, Youth Leader



On March 11, 2009 we were honored to visit with Mr. Honda, owner of The Otani Japanese Restaurant. With the help of his translator, he did a demonstration and helped our residential students make Sushi. Mr. Honda was very generous to share his talents and bring all of the supplies. Our students were incredibly receptive and eager to participate; many of them had never tried Sushi before. Mr. Honda commented that he was impressed the students were so willing to participate, he had never gotten such a

response when demonstrating at schools. We explained to him that many of our students use their hands as their "eyes". It was a wonderful experience for all involved!

Free Braille Books For Students

Lauri Kaplan, Parent Mentor

At OSSB, we've recently learned about the Braille Institute of California's Braille Special Collection. It was designed to increase Braille literacy by offering blind and visually impaired children the opportunity to order a variety of books throughout the year. These books are **free of charge** and allow students to create a special library of their own.

They have transcribed a collection of classic and contemporary literature and nonfiction material encompassing more than 1,100 titles and appealing to all reading levels. Families of children who are visually impaired (living in the U.S. or Canada, ages 3-18) may order up to **12 Braille books a year** from their seasonal catalogs.

To sign up for the Braille Special Collection: Call the Braille Institute at: (323) 906-3104
Or, toll free at: 1-800-BRAILLE (272-4553)

Dayton Club Offers Support and Assistance

Lauri Kaplan, Parent Mentor

Parents and families of blind and visually impaired students may be interested to know of a support group with "perks" in Dayton, Ohio. The mission of the Sightless Children Club, founded in 1952 "is to help blind or visually impaired people achieve self-confidence, social independence, self-sufficiency and self-respect by providing them with aids, adaptive equipment and technology needed to function on the same level as their sighted peers." The SCC is a non-profit organization composed of parents interested in the educational and social needs of blind/visually impaired youth and young adults.

The club meets once a month through the school year (always on the third Monday), and members come from as far away as Columbus and Cincinnati. Once a parent has attended six monthly meetings, they may turn in a request for equipment needs such as a Braille Notetaker, JAWS, or a computer to assist their child at home or school. The Sightless Children Club will meet next on April 20th at 7pm, at 10 Wilmington Place, Dayton, OH 45420. For more information about the Sightless Children Club, contact Lisa Buckingham at 937-671-9171 or e-mail info@sightlesschildren.org.

Book Club "Doings"

Janell Brown, OSSB Librarian

Book Club is enjoying the timeless classic RASCAL by Sterling North. It is riveting to read and listen to the adventures of the author and his pet raccoon back in World War One era Wisconsin. We will soon be choosing our last book to read for the school year...what will it be? The book club has some big decisions to make on this...or does the wily Mrs. Brown have a surprise book up her sleeve??! Tune in to the next issue of PANTHER PAWS to find out, or check out the Library News site on our great web page for a monthly update as to what is happening in your school library!

OSSB Girls Scouts— more than just selling cookies!

Marla Bump, co-leader

Girl Scout Troop 50267 (comprised of 1st-12th grade girls who attend OSSB), has been a busy troop! Under the direction of OSSB teacher Kathy Pietras and moms Beth Riley, Joyce Tolle and Marla Bump, the troop has been focusing on two primary goals: 1) learning more about conservation, and 2) cultivating a friendship with the neighbors who reside at nearby Wesley Glen Retirement Home .



Last fall, troop members were delighted by two special guests from the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium who brought along some "friends" of the four-legged variety. Our guests talked about the importance of the 3R's - reducing, reusing and recycling - and their significance in regard to the animal kingdom.

Just before Thanksgiving, the girls had an opportunity to "reuse" some plastic diet Coke bottles, by turning them into vases for narcissus bulbs. The troop decorated the vases and learned about oxygen the plants put out, and carbon dioxide they take in - very beneficial for our air. Additionally, the narcissus, or "paperwhites" have a lovely fragrance.

More recently, the girls met on a blustery cold day in January and made bird feeders out of bagels, peanut butter and bird seed for our feathered friends who don't travel south. Some of the feeders were hung on school grounds and were, reportedly, very much appreciated by the local birds.

During our first visit with the residents of Wesley Glen, after initial introductions, the girls had the opportunity to ask what life was like when the residents were young. And while they might not have conserved in their daily lives out of a concern for the well-being of the Earth, residents definitely had periods in their younger days when they had to conserve because of economic circumstances - not such a foreign concept lately!

The girls had another chance to visit with their new friends just before the holidays when the troop took them a wreath the girls made, and sang carols with the residents. Though competing interests precluded the girls from visiting before Valentine's Day, that didn't stop them from fashioning a heart-felt sentiment for their senior friends which was delivered by Wesley Glen employee and OSSB dad, Bud Riley. We hope to visit our Wesley Glen friends again a time or two before summer break.

So, while the annual cookie sale was greatly anticipated, the girls of troop 50267 have been doing more than just selling Thin Mints!

OSSB Wrestlers Attend Meet In Kansas

Congratulations to the OSSB wrestlers who participated in the North Central Association of Schools for the Blind wrestling championships in Kansas City, Kansas. On our way to Kansas City we stopped for the evening in St. Louis, Missouri. Friday morning we had the opportunity to visit the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, taking the tram to the top. WOW what a great experience! Leaning over the bench in the Arch and looking down 630 feet is a unique experience. Wrestlers participating were Sam Shepherd, Charles Hill, Kaleb Cutlip, Chris Harrington, Billy Peterson, Cody McFarland, and Nathan Johnson. A special thanks goes out to Chris Cifone our manager; he does a great job all the time!

Coach Jeff Shaw



Congratulations goes out to Chris Harrington who took second place and Cody McFarland who took first place. This is Cody's first championship of his career. Remember, students. . . if you practice like a champion, you will be a champion! For more results visit our web page. www.ossb.oh.gov. Thanks to Coach Maravola for his help as well; it is great having some young blood around. Mr. Maravola is now responsible for the NCASB website. Visit www.ncasb.org and let him know how he is doing!

Swimming Like Fish!

Coach Sharon Shaw



That's what the Pee Wee Swimmers swam like on March 4th at the Indiana School for the Blind during the Pee Wee Swimming Meet. Swimmers including Brendon Hamblin, Brandon Tolle, Seth Petty, Miranda Zultz, Eboni Bays-Holley, Olivia Bump, Jocee Janicki, Brianne Echard, Donald Stewart, Samantha Palmer, Ben Smith, Yaqi Schumacher, Maggie Tolle, Lee Ann Nichols, Anthony Smith, and Dayvon Bumper swam like fish to

a Victory. A few outstanding swimmers included Donald Stewart (4 - 1st places), Brandon Tolle (4 - 1st places), Samantha Palmer (3 - 1st places) and Seth Petty (1-1st place) Congratulations Pee Wee Swimmers.

Pee Wee Wrestlers Take On Indiana

Coach Jeff Shaw

Congratulations to the Pee Wee Wrestlers. They were able to wrestle Indiana's Pee Wee team the first week in March. Wrestlers include: Timmy Tanner, Dayvon Bumper, Donald Stewart, Boniface Womber, and Brandon Tolle. Timmy had two very good matches, losing both to heavier wrestlers from Indiana. Dayvon pinned all three of his opponents from Indiana. Donald won two against Indiana and lost one to Boniface. Boniface won all three of his matches. Brandon wrestled Boniface and Donald, and after wrestling very hard ended up losing to both. These young men have a lot of talent and a very good work ethic, watch out varsity!



Get Fit, And Feed The Hungry

Patricia Wilson, Student Council Co-Sponsor

WITH OSSB'S POUND-FOR-POUND CHALLENGE!

Spring is just around the corner and we're all getting the urge to get off the couch and get active. What if you could shed a few of those extra winter pounds, spend some quality activity time with your family, and help feed the hungry in your local community – all at the same time?



The OSSB Student Council has found the answer! The Feeding America © Pound-for-Pound Challenge (PFP Challenge)! The PFP Challenge © is sponsored by Feeding America, General Mills, Subway, and “The Biggest Loser.” Now you and your family can **Get Fit and Feed the Hungry!**

OSSB students and staff will be working together to meet the PFP Challenge to establish healthy weight goals, increase exercise, and track individual and group progress. Their efforts will benefit the Mid-Ohio Food Bank at a time when it is in greatest need—the summer months, when children are out of school. There are 3 ways you can participate:

PLEDGE TO LOSE WEIGHT. For every pound lost, General Mills will donate 10¢ worth of food (1 pound) to Feed America, who will in turn distribute it to local area food banks! Final weight loss results must be reported online between April 1 and May 5

COLLECT POUND-FOR-POUND SEALS. Millions of General Mills products (Cereal, Bars, Muffin Mix, Pancake Mix, and Yogurt) have a Pound For Pound seal near the UPC label (see image, above), which can be clipped off the packaging and sent to school. (If you send in yogurt lids, please be sure to clean them!) Labels and lids will be collected until **December 18, 2009**

DONATE ONLINE. Of course you can also choose to donate directly to Feeding America by visiting their website, www.FeedingAmerica.org, but where's the fun in that!?

Won't you and your family join us in answering Feeding America's Pound-for-Pound Challenge? Look for more information about the PFP Challenge in upcoming fliers and online at <http://www.pfpchallenge.com>.

Box-Tops, Campbell's Labels and Target

Lauri Kaplan, Parent Mentor

What do Box-Tops, Campbell's labels and Target have in common? They are all ways to help OSSB earn additional money throughout the year! Please send in any Box-tops (each one is worth 10 cents) or Campbell's labels to Mrs. Peirano's attention.

Target's *Take Charge of Education* program rewards OSSB when parents and teachers use their REDcard (Target Visa, Target Credit Card or Target Check Card). Target donates up to 1% of their purchases right back to OSSB. To participate, you'll need a REDcard. Please call Target at 1-800-316-6142 and let them know our **school's ID # 85364** . We appreciate your support!

Ohio State School for the Blind Important Dates to Remember

April 2009

- 10-17 Spring Break **NO SCHOOL**
- 24-26 Forensics & Swimming @ Indiana
- 30 Senior Dinner & Farewell Fling

May 2009

- 7 Athletic Awards Night
- 14 Elementary Arts Festival
- 20 Elementary Track & Field Day @ OSSB
- 21 Spring Recital and Concert
Technology & Resource Fair

Summer Camps At OSSB

Ann Pilewskie, Transition Coordinator

The Ohio State School for the Blind, in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Education Office for Exceptional Children, Center for Instructional Supports and Accessible Materials (CISAM), Braille Excellence for Students and Teachers Project (BEST grant), the Ohio Center for DeafBlind Education, and The Ohio State University, will be hosting a series of **summer programs**. The following camps will be offered this summer at OSSB:

Braille Immersion	June 15-19, 2009	Grades 3-7; Ages 8-12
Daily Living Skills,		
Lifetime Leisure and Rec.	June 22-26, 2009	Grades 4-8; Ages 9-14
Technology Exploration	June 22-26, 2009	Grades 9-12; Ages 14-18
Sports & Track Camp	August 3-7, 2009	Grades 7-12; Ages 13-18

Information may be found on our website: www.ossb.oh.gov. Click on *2009 Summer Camps*.

We are still accepting applications for the **OSSB BSVI Summer Work and Learn Program** for blind and visually impaired young adults aged 18-24. Please see our website for more information.



**Ohio State School
for the Blind
5220 N. High Street
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OSSB Mission Statement

The Ohio State School for the Blind, a publicly funded educational facility, is dedicated to the intellectual, social, physical and emotional growth of students with visual impairments, including those with multiple disabilities. Our mission is to work cooperatively with students, families and the community to provide an effective, enjoyable educational experience through specialized curriculum, equipment, material and individualized, disability-specific instruction to develop our students' unique potential.